

Arthur S. Flower inv. & del.

NOTES ON RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE IN MALTA,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BUILDINGS OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN.

By ARTHUR S. FLOWER [A.], M.A. Oxon., F.S.A.

Read at the General Meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 15th November 1897.

TO a great many Englishmen the name of Malta appears to call up but a single idea. We think of a dot upon the map of Europe, which represents, we know, a very important naval and military station, and are apt to suppose that the whole interest of this insignificant-looking place is wrapped up in its strategic value. Malta and Gibraltar are constantly referred to as British possessions of practically similar character, except that, if comparisons are ever made, they are usually in favour of "The Rock." The latter is certainly for the average Englishman a less uncongenial place of residence; and it is easy enough to understand the unfavourable opinions of Malta commonly expressed by military men, who feel, of course, that their lot might easily be cast amid more desirable surroundings. But it is extremely curious to notice how the bad impression thus derived, and augmented by certain well-known lines of Byron, has extended to all classes of English people. There is a very general notion that Malta is a place altogether uninviting, whither no one uncompelled by either duty or business could think of going for any length of time; even well-informed persons will declare that it merits nothing further than the half-day's visit sometimes accorded by travellers to or from the East, who think they have "done" the whole island in a scamper ashore from the mail steamer. By most architectural writers, even when treating of the buildings of the whole world, the very existence of Malta has been ignored. One may search through nearly every general history of architecture without finding so much as a hint given that this little island contains any buildings worthy of notice. By way of exception, it must, of course, be mentioned that Fergusson, in the Introduction to his *History of Modern Architecture*, describes one Maltese building—of quite recent erection, and probably the ugliest in the whole island—but no others find any place in his work; also that under the heading "Valletta," in the *Dictionary of Architecture*, some information, mainly statistical, is given; but these seem to exhaust the list of references in English architectural books.

As a matter of fact, to couple Gibraltar and Malta together as exactly similar places, because they are both fortresses in the Mediterranean Sea, is much as if one were to liken Reading to Oxford, because both happen to be garrison towns situated upon the banks of the Thames. The resemblance in either case ceases when we come to considerations of artistic interest, and, small as Malta is, it has many claims upon the attention of architects. This tiny island teems with huge buildings, the produce of many centuries of activity and ambition. There is no trace of littleness about the churches, the palaces, the castles of Malta; there belongs, furthermore, to most of them a certain character, unusual, striking, commanding

if not exactly captivating—which renders this out-of-the-way corner, to my mind, one of the most interesting parts of Europe. In justification of this perhaps over-bold statement, two reasons, at least, may be adduced. In the first place, Malta, like Constantinople, has been since the beginning of history a meeting-place of many nations and races, and thus, in a metaphorical sense, a very rich soil, fertile in diversified and luxuriant architectural

growths. Secondly, it has the unique peculiarity of actually being, in the most strict and literal sense, one solid block of almost perfect building stone. The island might justly be described as a mason's earthly paradise, and of its inhabitants a large proportion seem to be born masons.

Malta is principally composed of a limestone most easily worked, and yet, in its own climate at all events, of immense durability. This by itself, apart from the special features of Maltese history, has naturally been a great factor in architectural development. Just as in our own fields a bank may be thrown up with the earth dug from the corresponding ditch, so in Malta a house may be built almost anywhere with the stone cut out from its own cellars, a fortress from its own moats, a cathedral from its crypts. The tractability of this stone is extraordinary: it almost looks as if it could be shaped with a brush and comb—at any rate the mason seems to require little beyond a small axe. He, moreover, by virtue, I suppose, of hereditary instinct, does most of his work solely by eye, and seems to revel in ornamental details, boldly conceived and dashing carried out. I have been several times



FIG. 1.—THE CATHEDRAL, VALLETTA: WEST FRONT. 1573-78.

assured, on credible authority, that, even down to our own days, the custom in Malta as regards masonry has been that carved work, however elaborate and varied, was never reckoned or separately charged for in building contracts, but thrown in as a matter of course, and rather by way of pleasure to the workmen. For instance, as it was once explained to me, if, instead of a uniform row of plain corbels under your balcony, you suggested that you would like to have them diversified with scrolls, foliage, lions' heads, or even coats-of-arms, the mason would take it as a compliment to his own skill and taste which he could not have the impoliteness to

expect you to pay for. And yet this Maltese stone, so fascinating to handle, weathers, as a rule, so excellently that three or four centuries seem to make no damaging impression upon the fine-wrought ashlar with which every building, great or small, is clothed. External plaster or cement is nowhere to be seen in Malta, except as a covering to flat roofs; nor paint, except on wood—a material used very sparingly. The contrast in this respect with many Italian cities is most striking; the latter, with their cracking stucco, stained and patched, look positively mean and flimsy on passing from a land where everything has such an air of rock-like stability. What looks to an Englishman at first sight an extravagant use of stone is noticeable all over the island, even among the fields. If a peasant wants to rig



FIG. 2.—THE CATHEDRAL, VALLETTA : INTERIOR.

up a pulley for a well-bucket, instead of putting up a couple of posts, he builds something like a triumphal arch; the simple reason being that big blocks of stone are much more easily got than any sort of timber, and every one is perforce more or less of a mason. Buildings in course of construction may be seen surrounded, in place of scaffold-poles, by temporary but substantial piers of dry-jointed masonry carried up in a tapering form to considerable heights.

No higher testimony could be given to the intrinsic beauty and interest of the buildings of Malta than the enthusiasm they called forth from such a cultivated and critical mind as that of Dr. Church, the late Dean of St. Paul's. His impressions are given in some of his letters, published two years ago. Visiting Malta, accidentally as it were, in the course of a voyage to Greece, he frankly confesses his astonishment at finding so much to admire; and I

doubt if a more vivid or more truthful description could be given both of the first view of the capital, Valletta, and of the general aspect of the interior of the island :—

This is a most wonderful and beautiful place, quite the perfection of street architecture. The first thought that strikes one is that the whole town must have been built yesterday ; it looks as if only just out of the stone-masons' hands. Fancy the richest and warmest freestone (much warmer and richer than even the Bolsover stone)

employed with the greatest profusion, and cut into the most picturesque doorways, windows, galleries, and balconies, and set off with green woodwork in the balconies—streets of this stone seen from end to end, looking like streets of palaces for size and ornament, and seen in all kinds of curious perspective from the varied rise and fall of the ground ; and, further, these magnificent streets are the cleanest I ever saw. As a city, taking it as a whole, and seen by walking through its streets, I have never seen anything which struck me so much. . . . Then the separate *auberges* of the different nations or "languages" of the Order are as grand as they can be, all of the sixteenth century ; a rich and somewhat heavy and barbaric Italian or Palladian, but of very noble proportions.

The great church here, St. John's, the chapel of the Grand Master, and now called the Cathedral, is in the same style, heavy Italian piers and arches, and waggon vault ; but the pillars are cased with verde antico or with richly carved and gilded woodwork, and the floor is made up of the gravestones of the knights, all of the richest mosaic, and the roof painted in fresco. Valletta is quite worth a voyage to see. I had no idea that it was such a sight in itself.



FIG. 3. THE CATHEDRAL, VALLETTA : ST. JAMES'S CHAPEL.

Then there is the magnificent harbour and fortifications. . . . I only write to say how much I am delighted with Malta.

Ten days later Dean Church writes again :—

I still think Valletta one of the most striking specimens of architecture I have ever seen. . . . If ever you come travelling to Italy, don't miss Malta if you can help it.

Outside Valletta the country looks as if the people spent their time in nothing but building big stone walls across their land. But, in spite of this extremely unpromising similitude, it is anything but commonplace or uninteresting. It is in reality made a great deal of, these walls being a sort of buttresses to prevent the light soil being washed away by the rains ; and the narrow fields are now brilliantly green between their dreary grey boundaries, with wheat, barley,

and clover. The trees are very few: scattered, black, shrubby carobas (or locust-bean) are the most numerous over the fields; fig-trees, and here and there a single palm; and in one direction an olive plantation, in another a garden with dark Turkish-looking cypresses. . . . And the oriental look is increased by a number of square flat-roofed buildings, with few windows, either cottages or cattle sheds. The whole of the country round Valletta is densely populated—the people collected in large villages, or *casals*—so large that they look at a distance like great towns, most of them containing some striking-looking houses in narrow, winding lanes, and all of them a fine Italian church with its piazza, and its towers and central dome, whose outlines quite crowd the horizon, and stand out most picturesquely along the line of hills which inclose Valletta. On one of the highest points stands the old capital, Città Vecchia, fortified and looking down from a precipitous ridge over plain and sea, and crowned by a grand church.

In this graphic account of the salient features of Malta, it may be noticed that mention has been made of a third element, which contributes largely to the special peculiarities of



FIG. 4.—AUBERGE DE CASTILLE, VALLETTA.

Maltese architecture. Besides the ethnological and geological conditions, which in themselves make for an exceptional architectural development, there has been a politico-religious influence at work—that of “The Order.” What is this “Order” which has so impressed its seal upon Malta that, although it has been banished for a hundred years, one cannot go anywhere about the island without being reminded of it at every step? It is, I need hardly say, the semi-monastic, semi-military brotherhood of the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, without whose temporary occupation of Malta the greater part of its architectural splendours would never have come into existence. There are, it is true, many relics of former rulers of the island still remaining, but mostly of a sort belonging more to the province of archæology than of architecture. Much might be said about the so-called “Phœnician” remains, rude stone monuments still in fair preservation; of the many fragments of Greek and Roman structures; of the still more important and beautiful evidences of Sicilian-Norman influence. But though all these may be hunted up and discussed by those zealous for the pursuit, they contribute very little to the extant architecture of Malta, which is quite sufficient

by itself to occupy us for a considerable time, and has perhaps received less attention. This later architecture—to which I propose to confine these “Notes”—buildings still in regular occupation and use, is all practically of one character, most conveniently described as “Renaissance,” and all the principal examples of it were erected within a space of two hundred years, during the palmy days of the Order. To be more precise, it may be said that the great building era extends from the last quarter of the sixteenth century to the first quarter of the eighteenth. During this comparatively short period an extraordinary series of public works were carried out, on such a scale of magnitude and solidity as to give the impression that, however circumstances may alter and particular methods of use be changed, Malta has been sumptuously endowed with buildings for almost every purpose to the end of time.

The greater number of the photographs now exhibited were collected with the idea of illustrating—as far as possible, but the collection is by no means complete—the architecture, religious, official, military, characterising the period during which Malta was the headquarters of the Knights of St. John. Some of these photographs may perhaps be more or less familiar, but others are from buildings of which little notice has been taken; while a good many of them represent subjects practically inaccessible to the ordinary photographer, as I owe them entirely to the kindness and interest in architectural matters shown by Colonel John R. Hogg, late Commanding Royal Engineer in Malta, under whose directions these views were specially taken by Corporal Meiklejohn, R.E. His work will, I think, compare favourably with that of most professional photographers. Before referring to these photographs separately, it may be worth while to refresh our memories, very briefly, as to the connection of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem with the island of Malta, so far as it may help to explain the circumstances in which these buildings were erected. In doing so, it is hardly necessary to say that for our main historical facts we have to rely upon that excellent and almost exhaustive work, General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*.

The Order of St. John had its first beginnings in a small hospital for the relief of sick and poor pilgrims, established at Jerusalem by some Italian merchants about the year 1020, while the Holy Land still belonged to the Caliphs of Egypt. In connection with this several churches were founded, of which the principal was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and gave the name by which the whole institution came to be known. When, some eighty years later, the Crusaders captured the city, and installed Godfrey de Bouillon as King of Jerusalem, the hospital was found to be doing such good work, particularly for the wounded men of the besiegers, that Godfrey showed his appreciation of its usefulness by the gift of a manor in Europe; an example which was followed by several of the other leaders. Crusaders who returned home carried reports which resulted in further donations, while a good many joined the brotherhood themselves. All this encouraged the rector of the hospital, Peter Gerard, to give it a more definite organisation; at his suggestion all the members, in addition to devoting their lives to the service of the sick and poor, took upon themselves the three monastic vows as belonging to a regularly constituted religious body, and the establishment of the new Order was sanctioned by a Bull of Pope Paschal II., in the year 1113. The distinctive habit of a plain black robe, having on the breast a white cross of eight points—famous afterwards as the Malta Cross—was adopted at this time. During the next few years branch hospitals, to assist the rapidly increasing number of pilgrims, were established, under the management of members of the Order, in most of the maritime towns of Europe. But the character of the society soon underwent a remarkable change. When Gerard died, Raymond du Puy, a nobleman of Dauphiné, was elected in his place. The new superior was not content with the peaceful duties of the Order, and the general body, mostly old Crusaders, who had been pleased enough for a time with monastic quiet, were beginning to get restless and to long to

join in the constant fighting with the Saracens in which the King of Jerusalem was engaged. So with general approval a new constitution was adopted, and a new vow added, by which the whole body bound themselves to support the Christian cause against the infidels to the last drop of their blood, though promising at the same time not to bear arms, on any pretence, for any object but the defence of their faith. Raymond thus became the first military Master of the Order, and led the Knights Hospitalers, as they now began to be called, into action for the first time at the relief of Antioch, in the year 1119. For seven hundred years onwards from this time the history of the Order is one continuous story of warfare, carried on with marvellous determination against one Moslem enemy after another, first by land and afterwards chiefly by sea. Brilliantly successful in their first engagement, as in many others which soon followed, the Hospitallers rapidly gained a reputation which brought them recruits from all parts of Europe; besides leading to a form of imitation too interesting to be quite passed over. A French knight, Hugh de Payens, collected at Jerusalem another

fighting brotherhood, bound by the same monastic vows, but without any of the charitable duties which the Hospitallers still regularly performed. This likewise received Papal sanction, with a direction to wear a white mantle with a red cross, in contradistinction to the black mantle and white cross of the other Order. A portion of the palace, adjacent to Solomon's Temple, was assigned to the new fraternity, whence they became known as the Knights of the Temple, or, as they were afterwards called, the Templars. Founded almost at the same time, the two military Orders were perpetual and bitter rivals; but the career of the red-cross knights, although their name is more widely known, was in fact the less glorious, and within two centuries from its foundation the Order of the Temple came to a somewhat ignominious end, leaving that of the Hospital to carry on the defence of Christendom alone.

Time will not allow of tracing, even in outline, the wars and wanderings of the Hospitallers during the long period which elapsed before Malta became their headquarters;

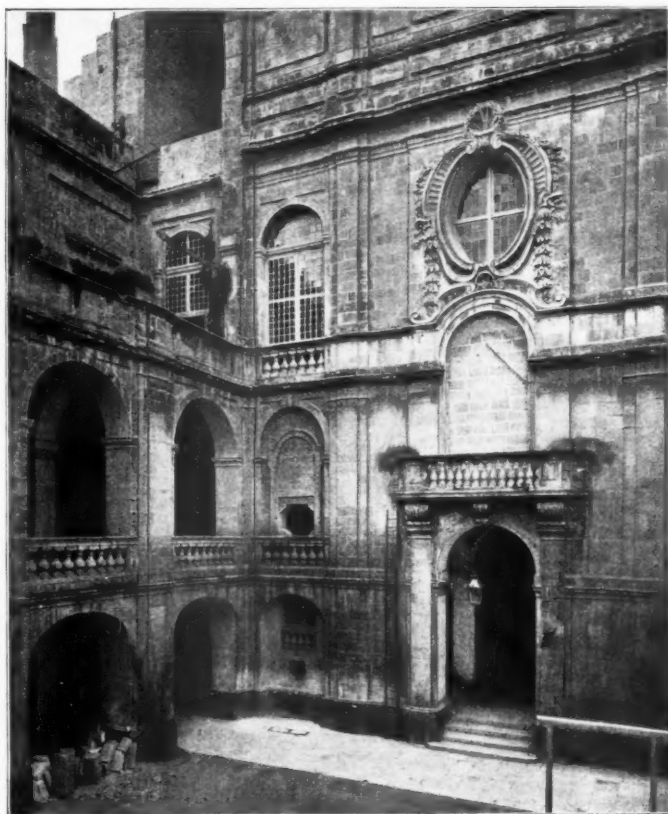


FIG. 5.—AUBERGE DE CASTILLE, VALLETTA: COURT.

we must pass on at once to this event, which happened in the year 1530. The group of Maltese islands were then little better than desolate, barren rocks, thinly inhabited by a poverty-stricken race of mixed, but mainly Arabic descent, and formed a valueless possession of the Spanish monarchy. The Knights of St. John had just been driven from Rhodes, their last stronghold in the East, by the Turks, after a memorable siege; with nothing left them but their ships, they were sailing hither and thither in search of a new home. Their chief desire was to obtain somewhere a good harbour, for they had come by this time to look upon naval enterprises as their regular occupation. According to modern ideas, it might be

said that they lived by piracy; though at all events they refrained from assaults upon their fellow-Christians, which was certainly not the custom among other sixteenth (and seventeenth) century navigators. As nothing more attractive could be acquired, L'Isle Adam, the Grand Master of the Order, obtained from the emperor Charles V. a grant of the Maltese islands, which were ceded to the Hospitallers in perpetual sovereignty. L'Isle Adam, the greatest man the Order ever produced, and one of the ablest commanders and diplomatists of his time in Europe, clearly foresaw the possibilities of Malta as a base for naval operations, poor, neglected, and undefended as the place then was. From the time of his landing there, in the year 1530, his efforts, and those of nearly all his successors for two centuries and a half after, were constantly directed to improving and strengthening the natural advantages of



FIG. 6.—AUBERGE D'ITALIE, VALLETTA.

the island. During the first few years of their occupation, the Knights, through poverty and the immediate prospect of Turkish attacks, were unable to undertake any kind of works but the most necessary fortifications; these, besides, had nearly all to be reconstructed after the great siege of 1565, so that we may take that date as marking the beginning of the

period with which we are concerned at present. This siege, the most striking event in the history of Malta, and one of the most heroic defences ever recorded, is hard to pass over



FIG. 7.—A CORNER OF THE PALACE, AND PUBLIC LIBRARY, VALLETTA.

entirely; but a curtailed account would be so unsatisfactory that it seems better to go on at once to the founding of Valletta, which followed immediately on the final repulse of the Turks.

The creation of Valletta, a city which suddenly sprang up on a very unpromising site, the summit of a steep bare ridge, never before occupied by buildings, was entirely the work of the Grand Master La Vallette, the hero of the great siege. Military considerations dictated both the position and dimensions of the town, and also the exceptional rapidity with which it was built. The ancient capital of Malta, Notabile, or Città Vecchia, as it came to be called after its supersession by Valletta, did not commend itself to the Knights, on account of its distance from the sea. Therefore at their first coming they had established themselves on the shore of the large inlet now called the Grand Harbour, but on the opposite side to where

Valletta now stands, strengthening a little town and fort already existing there. They had only been able, before the Turks came down upon them, to make one attempt at securing the other side of the harbour, by the construction of Fort St. Elmo. With the greatest difficulty they had just succeeded in holding their main position, although with tremendous losses, including that of St. Elmo with its whole garrison. The events of the siege had shown the defects of their present situation, as well as the vital importance of fortifying Mount Sciebberras, the high peninsula between the two harbours, where the most formidable of the Turkish batteries had been planted. La Vallette adopted the bold idea of transferring the headquarters of the Order, occupying the entire peninsula with a new town, and surrounding it with such fortifications as should defy all attacks. Subscriptions were collected from all parts of Europe, both from the members of the Order and from the principal Roman Catholic sovereigns. The Pope sent not only a contribution in money, but his chief military engineer, Francesco Laparelli, who played an important part in the carrying out of the scheme: he stayed for upwards of four years in Malta, and all the original fortifications of Valletta are said to be of his design.

On the 28th March 1566 the first stone of the new city was laid, with abundant ceremony, at the corner of St. John's bastion; La Vallette forthwith took up his abode in a wooden hut in the midst of the works, where he continued directing them from day to day, up to his death in the summer of 1568. So far nothing had been actually built except the outer fortifications; but the new Grand Master, del Monte, began his term of office by announcing that no one should enjoy his favour who did not, to the best of his ability, promote the building of the city, in which he took as great an interest as La Vallette himself. In consequence probably of this, Eustachio del Monte, his nephew, began at once to build a house—the first in Valletta—in the centre of the high ground, on the place occupied by one of the Turkish batteries during the siege. Others soon followed, but the special interest of this house is that it formed the nucleus of the present Governor's Palace. In the next year, 1570, the fortifications being well advanced, Laparelli returned to Rome, and the designing of all the works, military, civil, and even ecclesiastical, undertaken by the Order, fell from that time into the hands of a very remarkable man, about whom it is a pity that so little appears to be known, Gerolamo Cassar. Probably the best account to give of him will be by quoting from a document among the registers of the Council of the Order, part of which is printed in an official publication of the Government of Malta. This paper bears the date of the 18th May 1581, and begins as follows: "The Grand Master, Jean Levesque de la Cassière certifies that Girolamo (*sic*) Cassar, of the Maltese nation, ordinary Architect and Engineer of the Order, during many years lent his services in the said capacity, from 1565 to 1581." After mentioning his services during the siege, it goes on: "Girolamo Cassar was one of the Engineers under whose direction Valletta was built. The designs for the seven Auberges of the Languages are his; and that of the Magisterial Palace; and the most remarkable of all his works, is the Church of St. John." A list of other buildings designed by Cassar follows, including, in Valletta, the churches of Sta. Caterina d'Italia, San Paolo Naufrago (since rebuilt), and monasteries and churches for the Augustinians (since rebuilt), Carmelites, Dominicans (since rebuilt), and Franciscans; outside, the Capuchin monastery (since altered and enlarged) at Floriana, and the fortress-palace called the Tower of Verdala. It is interesting to notice that Cassar was succeeded as Chief Engineer to the Order by his son, Vittorio Cassar, several of whose military works remain round the coast, though there never fell to him such grand opportunities as were enjoyed by his father.

The story of the building of Valletta may be completed in a few words. Del Monte was so eager to press on the work that on the 18th March 1571 he left the old head-

quarters of the Order, and made a formal entry into the unfinished city. Nothing had yet been done upon the site intended for the magisterial palace, but the house just built by Eustachio del Monte was purchased by the Order, and its enlargement begun, when, early in the next year, the Grand Master died. He was succeeded by La Cassière, a native of



FIG. 8.—CHAPEL IN FORT ST. ELMO, VALLETTA, BUILT 1553, RESTORED 1649.

Auvergne, to whom, although singularly unsuccessful in other affairs—his rule is described as “an era of turbulence and confusion from beginning to end,” and terminated in open mutiny—belongs the merit of having encouraged Cassar to his highest efforts, and of having carried to completion the finest of the architectural works which give to Malta its claim to distinction. La Cassière died in 1581, the year in which the record of Cassar’s principal

achievements was attested; and at this point it is time to leave historical matters, and turn to the consideration of the buildings themselves.

From an architectural point of view by far the most interesting building in Malta is the Church of St. John the Baptist at Valletta, formerly the particular church of the Knights of St. John. It is now styled "Co Cathedral," because of equal ecclesiastical rank with the Cathedral Church of The Conversion of St. Paul, at Notabile, or Città Vecchia, the ancient capital of the island; each having its own independent chapter, but containing each a throne for the same archbishop. For so large and massive a structure, this church took a remarkably short time to build; the foundations having been begun on the 22nd November 1573 the fabric was completed by July 1577, and the consecration ceremony took place on the 20th February 1578. As already mentioned, it was the work of one architect, Gerolamo Cassar, and of one Grand Master, La Cassière, by whom the entire cost of its construction, as well as a large endowment for maintenance, was provided. Since that time St. John's has undergone no structural changes of importance: its interior has grown richer and richer in its furniture, its decoration, its monuments; but, on the whole, all these additions seem to harmonise wonderfully well with the original conception. The plan* of the building is somewhat peculiar, though extremely simple. The church itself consists only of a large nave, with side chapels—there is no structural choir—and two western towers; but the west (or, to be strictly accurate, south-west) façade is extended laterally on both sides by attached buildings in the same alignment and of equal height with the end of the actual nave, so that the plan becomes practically of the form of the letter T reversed. It is stated by Ferres in his *Chiese di Malta* that the church as first projected was to have been very much longer; that it was, in fact, intended to have had a structural choir considerably longer than the present ritual choir, so that the building would have extended on to the ground now occupied by the Public Library, and have been connected by a corridor with the Grand Master's Palace. But at all events this idea must have been very soon abandoned, for the church appears to have been finished off by its original builders in its present shape. The most striking thing about the nave is its enormous width—51 feet—which is made the more apparent by the barrel-vault which spans it being of the very moderate height of 64 feet 3 inches only. The total internal length, including the small apse at the eastern end, is about 189 feet, and the total internal width of the church itself, including the side chapels, but not the corridors outside them, is 118 feet. The form of the main vault, as regards its transverse section, will at once be noticed as unusual in a building of the date and style of this church. It is very perceptibly pointed, and what is, perhaps, still more curious, the same thing is to be found in the windows of the belfry stage of the towers. In both cases the departure from a semicircular shape must be due to a desire for greater stability, and shows that Cassar was to some extent unfettered by Italian precedents. Whether, however, the pointed vault of St. John's may be traced beyond this to the Maltese architect's previous acquaintance with Sicilian-Gothic work, of which a few good specimens still remain in Malta; or to the predominant Arabic strain in the blood of his nation; or, again, to suggestions from the Knights themselves, remembering the former buildings of the Order in Rhodes and Cyprus—all this is matter of conjecture, about which I will not attempt to theorise. It may be of some interest, though, to notice how nearly this vault resembles, in its curves, those slightly pointed vaults of the French-Romanesque builders, raised just enough to obviate the risk of sinking at the crown, which Viollet-Le-Duc supposes to have originated

* For the plan and section of St. John's Church, which I have made in illustration of this Paper, I am primarily indebted to some MS. drawings and notes given to me by the late Sir Ferdinand Inglott, of Valletta: these have

been supplemented by additional particulars and corrections kindly supplied by Chevalier E. L. Galizia (F.), of Valletta, and to some extent by photographs and my own observations.—A. S. F.

the regular use of pointed-arch construction. Equally, perhaps even more noticeable, as an architectural singularity, is the fact that the vault springs straight from the architrave of the nave-arcade, without the intervention of any kind of frieze or cornice. The absence, however, of an internal cornice, utterly anomalous as it may be called, is, I venture to think, one of the principal elements which render St. John's Church so satisfactory in general effect. In the first place, it adds greatly to the impression of ample width. In the next, it allows the arches of the nave-arcade to appear of their due importance; and, finally, it does not abruptly check the eye before it reaches the vault, with the inevitable suggestion that a horizontal ceiling would be the only appropriate termination to such a projection. A shelf-like intermediate cornice is the



FIG. 9.—ST. HELENA GATE, COTONERA LINES (1675).



FIG. 10.—GATE OF FORT MANOEL (1726).

bane of almost every Renaissance interior, and St. John's is, perhaps, unique among large churches in being free from this deformity. That it is so is very probably due more to accident than to intention, though the accident was at any rate a happy one in its results. Two separate reasons to account for it have been given. In Ferres' book, before referred to, it is stated that, difficulties occurring because of the weight of the main vault, the design was considerably modified during execution. This is the prosaic mode of explanation. The other, a sort of legend current in Malta, which I have not seen in print, is to the effect that when Cassar had raised the walls of his nave as high as the architrave, some of the other military engineers—either really apprehensive or affecting to be so through jealousy—pointed out to the Council of the Order that if the new church were carried up much higher it would interfere with the clear range seaward of the guns of an important battery, St. James's Cavalier, situated just above. So Cassar, the story goes, was reminded how with the Knights of St. John thoughts of display must ever give place to the stern exigencies of perpetual

preparation for war, and was constrained to keep down his roof accordingly. It has never, so far as I know, been suggested that he might have been original enough and bold enough to make his building as we see it, simply because he liked to have it so; he could not, it seems to be thought, have been so daringly unconventional. Still there is enough about Cassar's

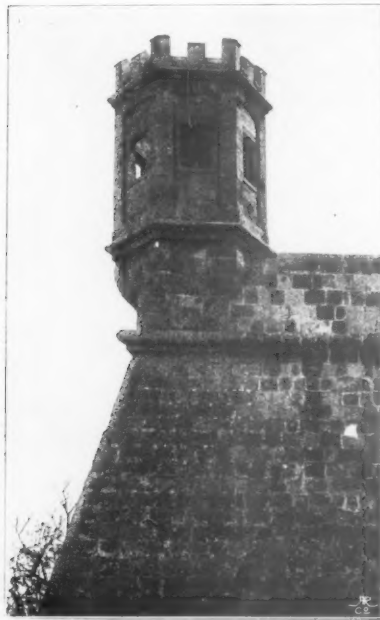


FIG. 11.—AN ECHAUGETTE, FLORIANA LINES.

work, here and elsewhere, to arouse the feeling that this might have been the true reason—I must confess I should rather like to believe that it was—though at the same time the tale of the lowering of the intended height of the church, for the chance of a better shot at the Turks, is so characteristic of the Order that it has a value of its own.

If St. John's Church were described as it deserves it would not be possible even to mention, however briefly, the other buildings of which views are exhibited; but there are one or two features which must be alluded to in passing. The unusual position of the organ, or organs (against the east wall, on either side of the small apse which terminates the choir, and overhanging the returned stalls), very effective in every sense, but only possible in a church of great width, will of course be noticed: this, however, has already been described, with full appreciation, by the late Mr. R. Herbert Carpenter [F.] in his *Addenda* to the paper on *Musical Requirements in Church Planning*, by Mr. John Belcher [F.], read here some years ago.* The side chapels require a word of explanation as to their original use, which will also apply to a group of buildings by the same architect, next to be mentioned. It will be seen, on the

plan, that most of these chapels bear, in addition to the name of a saint, a geographical title. This was in consequence of the cosmopolitan nature of the Order, which contained within itself a number of distinct and quasi-independent brotherhoods, each one composed of Knights hailing from a particular country or province of Europe. These divisions, each of which had its own elected head, were termed *langues*, or "languages," and from the time when they were regularly organised, in 1331, every candidate wishing to join the Order had to satisfy one or other of them, not only of his knighthood, but of the nobility of his descent, in the most strict accordance with the heraldic customs of the particular country. Heraldry always figures largely in the buildings of the Order, and the importance attached to it can be better understood when we read of the rigid and elaborate rules laid down by different *langues* as to the number of quarterings requisite for admission, and the proofs by which claims had to be supported. The number of *langues* at first was seven, viz. Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Germany, England, and Aragon. An eighth, Castile and Portugal, was added in 1461; but the *langue* of England, was practically destroyed in 1540 by the action of Henry VIII., so that, although it had played a great part in the earlier history of the Order, we hear very little of it in connection with Malta. A new *langue* was created in 1782 for Bavaria, and joined to the *langue* of England, still considered as only dormant, under the title of the Anglo-Bavarian *langue*.

* See TRANSACTIONS, Vol. V. N.S. p. 46.

This, however, which had not any real association with England, disappeared at the dispersal of the Knights from Malta in 1798, the branch of the Order of St. John now flourishing in England being a revival, dating from 1831, of the old sixth *langue*, suppressed at the Reformation. Those members of each *langue* who were for the time serving at headquarters—a considerable number of Knights were usually occupied in their own countries, managing the “commanderies,” or estates belonging to the Order—lived all together, very much like members of a college in one of our own universities, in a large building called an *auberge*, under the presidency of their “conventual bailiff,” as the head of the *langue* was styled. These eight bailiffs were the principal dignitaries of the Order, ranking next to the Grand Master, and forming by themselves his ordinary council. Each of them held *ex officio* one of the great administrative posts of the Order, each of these offices being attached in perpetuity to a particular *langue*, probably to maintain a balance of power; so that the *auberge*, besides being the residence of a body of from 100 to 150 Knights, was also the office of a department of the Government, and the palace of a wealthy grandee.

At the building of Valletta, as soon as each *langue* had been told off to its own post along the new ramparts—for it was customary, in every place garrisoned by the Order, that each should be responsible for a particular section of the front, adding thus the element of national rivalry to the general *esprit de corps*—the erection of *auberges* was begun. Most of these, as already mentioned, were the work of Cassar, and the finest of them, though adapted to different uses, still remain in good preservation. The most striking, both in architecture and position, is the

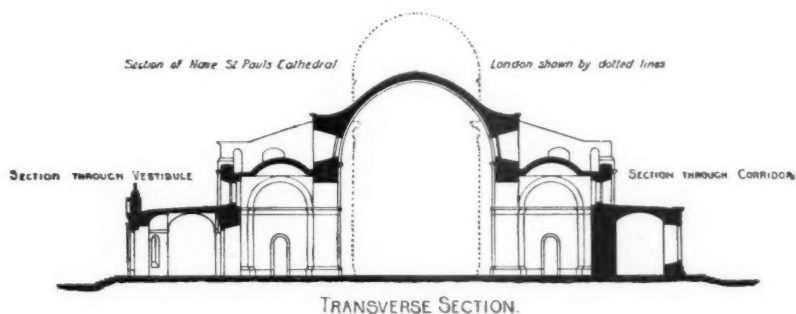
Auberge de Castille, now the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer Mess. This, besides an imposing exterior, open on three sides, has a very effective court, with two-storied arcades round three sides (the illustration (p. 31) unfortunately shows only a small part of the arcades), and a fine double staircase. Next, probably, comes the *Auberge d'Italie*, now the R.E. office, standing



FIG. 12.—ATTARD CHURCH: WEST DOOR (circa 1620).

in a narrow street, but interesting in its details. Much larger than any of the *auberges*, but severely plain in its exterior, the Magisterial Palace, occupied formerly by the Grand Masters, now by the Governors of Malta, must now be mentioned, though very briefly. It forms an almost square block, 316 feet by 266 feet, open all round, and mainly of two stories only, though from the great height of the rooms the building is loftier than might appear from this description. The two principal courts are 135 feet by 65 feet, and 102 feet by 98 feet, respectively. The ground floor is occupied by Government offices and by stables, all the State apartments, as well as the residential portion of the building, being on the first floor. The great hall of the Knights, 82 feet long by 37 feet wide and 31 feet high, is at present ruined in appearance by the treatment it underwent at the hands of English decorators, about the year 1820, to adapt it to the purposes of a throne-room and ball-room. A Georgian-Greek interior, all white and gold, has been formed by coverings of wood and canvas, although behind them are a series of historical frescoes commemorating the great siege, and a ceiling of carved and painted beams, such as may still be seen in several of the other rooms. The council-chamber, which retains its original aspect almost unimpaired, is a fine room, 69 feet long by 25 feet wide, and 27 feet high; besides a frieze of naval battles, it has some remarkable hangings of Gobelins tapestry. One other room only can be mentioned now—the famous armoury, 255 feet long by 38 feet wide, containing one of the most interesting collections of arms and armour in Europe. Close to the Palace there will be noticed in one of the views a building of good late Renaissance design: this is the Public Library, which was built as the Library of the Order about the year 1780. Two other palaces of the Grand Masters are still used by the Governors of Malta—St. Antonio, about four miles from Valletta, dating from about 1630, but of comparatively small architectural interest; and the fortified hunting-lodge called the Tower of Verdala. This is very prettily situated in one of the remotest parts of the island, and remains much the same as when built by Gerolamo Cassar for the Grand Master Verdala in 1586. It consists of a square keep of three stories, with a turret, of somewhat unusual shape, forming on plan an irregular pentagon, like the bastion of a fort, rising a story higher at each angle. In the interior are some good rooms, mostly vaulted in stone, and enriched with frescoes and other paintings.

It is hard to say anything about the fortifications of Valletta without seeming to exaggerate, but they are literally stupendous. Their extent can only be appreciated by looking at the map, and even then their scale will almost certainly be underestimated, so much do they exceed ordinary works of the kind in magnitude. They are the result of the devotion for centuries of the immense resources of the Order, both in money and in slaves, under the direction of the ablest engineers of Europe, to rendering the place not merely reasonably, but also ostentatiously secure against any possible attack. It soon became an object of ambition with every Grand Master to add some new fort or line of works—to which he generally attached his own name—to the existing defences, which were thus ever extending further and further from the capital. So all the later fortifications have as much the character of monuments of personal pride as of utilitarian undertakings. The readiness, too, with which the ground lent itself to the construction of enormously deep dry ditches and towering stone ramparts, when labour was of no account—every cruise of the galleys bringing a fresh supply of Turkish prisoners of war—resulted in works of a total height to be seen, I believe, nowhere else. The inner lines of Valletta, which stretch across the peninsula from harbour to harbour, measure, in some places, as much as 153 feet sheer up from the bottom of the ditch to the crest of the parapet; and this does not refer to an isolated tower, but to a wide bastion. Besides the many concentric lines defending Valletta and its suburbs on the land side, on every point of rock jutting out into the harbour is built an imposing fort—or rather castle,



- References to Plan
- | | |
|---|---|
| A High Altar | J Chapel of St Paul |
| B Chapel of the Baptism of Christ | K " " St Michael |
| C " " the Blessed Sacrament & Our Lady of Philermos | L " " St Charles |
| D " " St Sebastian | M Stairs to Crypt, Chapel of the Crucifixion. |
| E " " St George | N N Organ (over Choir Stalls) |
| F " " St James | O Sovereign's Throne |
| G " " The Decollation of St John | P Archbishop's Throne |
| H " " The Adoration of the Magi | Q Pulpit |
| I " " St Catherine | |
- The names in the side Chapels are those of the Languages of the Order to which each was appropriated

ERRATUM.—St. Michael's Chapel (K) should be assigned to Provence, and St. Charles's Chapel (L) to England and Bavaria.

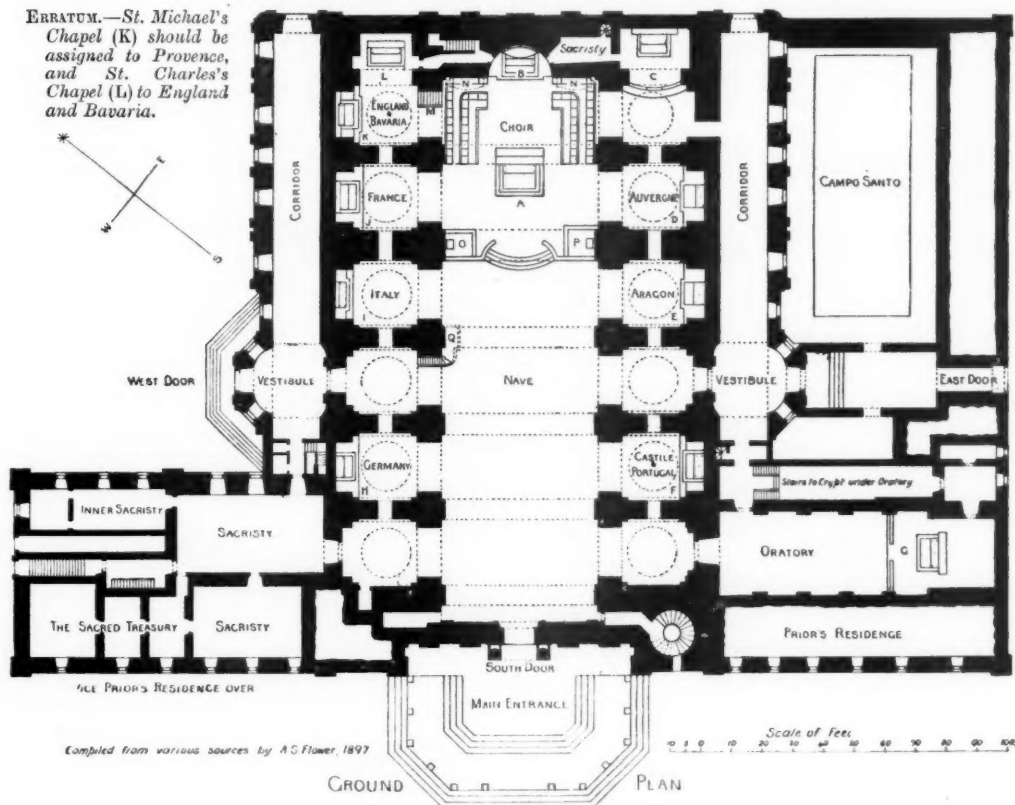


FIG. 13.—THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, VALLETTA, MALTA. GEROLAMO CASSAR, ARCHITECT. 1573-78.

according to the ordinary sense of the two words—and to several of these, especially Forts St. Angelo and St. Elmo, belongs a good deal of architectural as well as historic interest. The heroic incidents associated with the little chapel of Fort St. Elmo form probably the most familiar scene in the history of Malta; but the appearance of the building is by no means so well known, so that I am particularly fortunate in being able to show a view of the interior. In fortifications such as these the gates are of course very striking: some of them are in themselves worthy to rank with the grandest works of Sanmichele at Verona, but their effect is increased immensely by their position. As Mr. E. Ingress Bell [*F.*], in “An Architect’s Notes in Malta,” published in *The Builder*, 28th March 1885, graphically describes it, “we enter the Porta Reale across the drawbridge, which trembles over the dark abyss of the main ditch which separates Valletta from Floriana, the bottom of which no eye can see.” As a matter of fact I have walked along the bottom of this ditch, but certainly felt almost lost there: it was like a mountain pass with both sides absolutely precipitous. To get into Valletta at all, except by water, it is necessary to pass through three of these tremendous barriers: these are all represented in the photographs exhibited, as well as some of the most remarkable gates of the outlying works, though there are many others of nearly equal merit.

Valletta alone contains so many buildings of interest that a mere list of them would occupy too much time. Of all those of which views are shown brief particulars are annexed. There is one, however, which deserves mention for its intimate connection with the Order of St. John. This is the Great Hospital, which, true to their traditions, was one of the first buildings the Knights erected, and always maintained on a positively lavish scale of expenditure. It is perhaps chiefly noteworthy for containing the largest ward ever built—503 feet long by 35 feet wide, with a shorter ward of the same width opening out of it. Of the churches it must now suffice to say that there are twenty-four, several of them splendid buildings, besides chapels and oratories. Outside Valletta, in the suburbs and country villages, may be counted a still greater number of churches, together with almost innumerable detached chapels. Many of the latter are circular or octagonal on plan, and domed, with very graceful outlines. The larger village churches have usually two western towers and a dome at the crossing. To give an idea of their scale two typical churches, both dating from the seventeenth century, may be mentioned: Zeitun Church, 153 feet long and 111 feet broad, including side chapels, with a nave of 31 feet wide; and Zebbug Church, 165 feet long, 122 feet wide, and 32 feet across the nave. As to that ungainly giant, Musta—which, as Mr. Ingress Bell says, is “the show church of the island”—I can only endorse his remarks that the exterior ornamentation is absurdly out of scale, and that of the decoration of the interior the less said the better. A warning, though, must be added here that Fergusson, in his well-known account of the building of this church, has—for rhetorical effect, apparently—very unjustly depreciated the architect, Signor Giorgio Grognet. Fergusson’s statement, that “although the merit of the original suggestion of the design is due to a local architect of the name of Grognet, the real architect of the building was the village mason, Angelo Gatt,” can only be compared for accuracy to some of those playful perversions of events which Macaulay passed off as history. No one certainly would gather from these words that Grognet was actually the architect of the church from its inception to its final completion, while Gatt was only employed as master-mason during the latter part of the operations.

Città Vecchia, or Notabile, originally the chief city of the island, and the scene of St. Paul’s sojourn there, commemorated in the dedication of many religious buildings, is exceedingly picturesque, both within and without. Its Romanesque cathedral was destroyed by an earthquake about two hundred years ago, and the present grandly situated building, of

which Lorenzo Gafà, a Maltese, was architect, was consecrated in 1702. The wide nave, upwards of 36 feet in span, is noteworthy; also the carved and inlaid choir-stalls, said to date from 1480, and very good in design and execution; and, in a different sense, the gorgeous altar-ornaments and other treasures which escaped the general pillage of the island by the French invaders in 1798.

There remains something to be said on the characteristics of the architecture of the Order. If I could follow the author of a popular book of travel, who has described Malta at some length, this would be easy. Of St. John's Cathedral he says: "There is no architectural character whatever in this edifice" [!] To Dean Church these buildings appeared "rich and somewhat heavy Italian or Palladian, but of very noble proportions." Mr. Ingress Bell, taking a more general view, says "there is a curious similarity between the architecture of Malta and that of some of the Belgian towns, which is explained by the presence of the Spaniard. Spanish architects in great numbers were in all probability employed upon the city of Valletta. Those peculiarly licentious forms of Renaissance art which are distinctive of Spain—those defiant discursive curly-wurly doorways and dressings, which are plentiful in Antwerp—have their exact counterparts in Valletta." This is a pretty fair description of many Maltese buildings; a strong resemblance to Spanish work, particularly in ornament, may often be traced. But of the actual presence of Spanish architects I can find no evidence. There are even circumstances which suggest that Maltese masons may have been transferred to Spain, rather than Spaniards to Malta. This florid manner, however, belongs only to the later part of our period, and rather to the ecclesiastical and domestic work of the Maltese themselves, who, it must be remembered, always maintained a separate national existence, than to the official architecture of their rulers. This, in the days before the Order itself fell away into luxury and ostentation, was marked by severe sobriety. Heaviness it may have had, but not richness; even the term Palladian is inappropriate. It is really more akin to early Florentine Renaissance than to any other type; and it is significant that Laparelli, the only foreigner known to have taken a leading part in the building of Valletta, was a Tuscan. His name even suggests a possible descent from the great Brunellesco dei Lapi. But whencesoever derived, all the buildings of what may be called the heroic age of the Order have a particular stamp upon them—they are exclusively Doric. They are marked by a restraint, and therefore a unity, somewhat uncommon in Renaissance design; moreover, the style so consistently followed, from plinth to parapet, is in singular conformity with the spirit of the Order. The Knights of St. John were in many respects the representatives, the re-incarnation of the Spartan ideal; and just as the Dorian character created, as has been well said, the old Doric architecture, with its severity so expressive of the sternness of Dorian purpose, so another phase of the same manly style was most fittingly employed in the temples and the dwellings of this equally military and monastic society, whose watchwords were courage and temperance. Their architects were soldiers also; and if we miss from their works Ionic softness or Corinthian profusion—if, in other words, we call them hard and bare, we may at least recognise in them the merit of strong and single-minded devotion to honourable aims, which is after all a form of beauty.

In reaching the limit, not by any means of my subject, but of the length allowable in a paper of this kind, the superficial and desultory nature of these remarks comes sadly home; but the field to be covered is a very large one, and it is extremely difficult even to indicate the extent of it, which is all that I have been endeavouring to do. The names of some of the friends who have given valuable aid have been already mentioned; but I have now to add a grateful acknowledgment, that for my introduction to the architectural wonders of Malta,

and for facilities in examining them, I am wholly indebted to the kindness of General Sir Henry A. Smyth, K.C.M.G., late Governor of the island.

POSTSCRIPT.—In the collection of material for this Paper, at first intended to have a wider scope, I have been greatly indebted to the valuable and most readily given assistance of Chevalier E. L. Galizia [F.], of Valletta, whose knowledge both of the ancient and modern architecture of Malta is probably unrivalled. Among other information thus supplied was a full description of the present method of constructing the flat roofs so characteristic of Maltese buildings of all ages. My "Notes" having been confined to the works of an earlier period, Chevalier Galizia's interesting memoranda, which were offered to the Institute as much as to myself, are printed below as an appendix.

METHOD FOLLOWED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROOFS ("TERRAZZI") IN MALTA.

By THE CHEVALIER E. L. GALIZIA [F.].

Roofs (*terrazzi*) are made of thin slabs of freestone (*globigerina* limestone), the same kind as that generally used for building purposes. The dimensions of these slabs are as follows:—Length 2 ft. 6 in.,

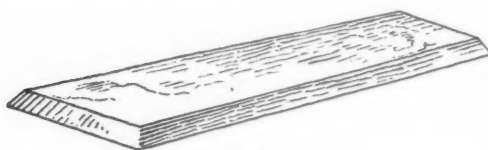


FIG. 1.

width 10 in. to 12 in., thickness $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. to $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (fig. 1). The slabs are let into the bays between the iron joists, and set with lime mortar flush with bottom flanges (fig. 2). They are afterwards jointed together, and properly wedged in with small bits of stone, more or less wedge-shaped, and also set with lime mortar.

When the above work is completely carried out a layer called *psisa* (see fig. 2) is laid all over the roof. This layer consists of stone chippings obtained from the dressing of building stone, and it has a thickness varying from 4 in. to 5 in. This

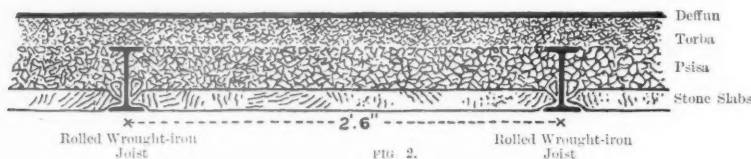


FIG. 2.

material when laid is properly watered and sloped towards those parts where rain-water pipes are intended to be fixed, in order that the rain water may find its way off.

Another layer called *torba*, of a thickness of about 4 in., as shown in fig. 2, is afterwards applied: it consists of twelve parts stone chippings, rather finer than those already described, and one part



FIG. 3.

of lime, mixed together and thoroughly saturated with fresh water. These ingredients are prepared previous to their being laid, and afterwards deposited in a uniform thickness all over the first layer (*psisa*). As soon as laid it is rammed down gently with wooden rammers (see fig. 3), in order to correct all irregularities; a quantity of water is sprinkled at intervals upon the surface while ramming, in

order to render it compact. This process is carried out by a gang of countrywomen under the charge of a good plasterer.

Immediately afterwards a thin grouting, about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick, composed of two parts of liquid lime and one part of fine broken pottery, properly crushed (*deffun*), is spread over the *torba*; the surface of this mixture, as soon as spread, is also gently rammed down. During the ramming three other parts of finer *deffun* are spread on the grout at intervals, accompanied by sprinkling fresh water with a white-washing brush, and thus the operation is continued until the whole mass is properly rendered compact and smooth. This process takes a rather long time, otherwise the formation of *terrazzi* will not be of a good consistency.

When the *terrazzo* is thoroughly indurated, its surface is finished off very smooth and even by

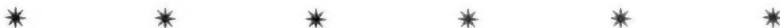
means of small iron or steel trowels (see fig. 4). During this operation (which is executed by another gang of countrywomen) the surface is kept in a damp state by sprinkling water continuously while it is trowelled over and over again for a long time until it is properly set, and turned out into a very sound condition.

A square foot of this kind of roof and terrace, not including the iron joists, and of a thickness of 10 in., costs threepence, and weighs 70·3902 lb.

The terrace after completion must not be disturbed until it is sufficiently hardened. Walling across a terrace before it is hard enough will cause the same to crack. A great quantity of water used in making terraces has a great influence on their good results; too much water is never injurious. The success of this kind of work, however, depends entirely upon the proper management of the plasterer directing the work. Rapid evaporation is injurious, causing cracks: it is prevented by covering the terrace for a few weeks (the longer the better) with straw kept continually moist, which protects the roof from the direct action of the sun and wind. But in order to have a very good and more substantial work, the construction of *terrazzi* should always be carried out in winter time if possible.



FIG. 4.



Mr. Arthur Cates [F.] sends the following inscriptions, copied by him from the monuments of the Designer and the Builder respectively on each side of the entrance to the great domed church of Moustá:—

GEORGIUS · GEONGNET · DE · VASSÉ ·
ILLUSTRI · FAMILA · MELITENSI ·
VIR · ERUDITISSIMUS ·
PHILOSOPHICIS · DISCIPLINIS ·
EGREGIE · EXCULTUS ·
FLURUM · LINGUARUM · PERITUS ·
QUI ·
IMPERANTE · NAPOLEONE I ·
XVIII · ANNOS · MILITAVIT ·
QUANTUM · ARCHÆCTONICA · ARTE
PRESTITITIT ·
ADMIRABILE · HOC · TEMPLUM ·
ROMANI · PANTHEONI · ÆMULUM ·
CUJUS · IPSE · EST · MOLITOR ·
SATIS · SUPERQUE · DECLARAT ·
OBIIIT · PRID · NON · SEPT · AN · MDCCCLXII
ANNOS · NATUS · LXXXVIII
SAC · JOSEPHUS · ZAMMIT · LLD ·
AMICO · SUO · DULCISS · SCRIPSIT ·

ANGELUS GATT

ÆDIFICATOR · CEMENTARIUS
MIRANDO · ARTIS · MAGISTERIO ·
TEMPLUM · HOC · SINE · ULLO · FULCIMINE ·
XXVII · ANNORUM · SPATIO ·
AB · IMO · AD · SUMMUM · EXEGIT ·
ABSOLVITQUE · ANNO · MDCCCLX ·
HEIC · IN · PACE · ✠ · REQUIESCIT ·
OBIIIT · PRID · ID · NOV · AN · MDCCCLXXV ·
ANNOS · AGENS · LXXX ·

DISCUSSION OF MR. FLOWER'S PAPER.

COLONEL LENOX PRENDERGAST [H.A.] asked permission to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Flower for his extremely interesting paper. As the lecturer had truly said, Malta was a closed book to the general British public. Many, and he among them, had touched there, but few had any knowledge of its great architectural attractions, and he interposed merely for the purpose of inducing those visitors from the island who were present to give the Institute the benefit of their experience. The material at the builder's disposal was a joy to anybody interested in great architectural works. This most beautiful stone, which could be almost manipulated like chalk, lent itself to decoration not merely in the soft, but as it hardened with exposure, it became a most enduring and charming decorative material to deal with. That of itself was an immense recommendation. It was almost unique to find such a series of buildings erected, so to speak, for one employer. The Grand Masters were great personages, having large funds at their disposal, which they used pretty freely. With regard to Mr. Flower's criticism of the Church of St. John, he (the speaker) had very little knowledge of this building, but he had been in it, and thought there was something exceedingly attractive about it. There was no doubt that it was out of proportion, the height was altogether wrong, but it had been so skilfully dealt with, and was so magnificent in appearance, that one could hardly say anything against it. Mr. Flower seemed to be under the impression that the style necessitated a large internal cornice. He (the speaker) thought the Maltese architect deserved the greatest credit for having dealt with this matter so skilfully. In discussing these things, one often failed to recollect the purpose for which these buildings were erected. They were not erected in order to make merely a pretty church—this proceeding had been left to the Victorian era!—they were built for a specific purpose. There were half a dozen or more—seven, he thought in all—*langues*, i.e., lodges of the Order, whose business it was to deal with the work belonging to different countries, and this church was merely a series of chapels; the *langue* of each country having its own chapel, which opened into a spacious hall with a barrel-vault over it, and this was the nave of the church, but the *raison d'être* of the whole building was this series of chapels. The architect set to work, and, being a local man, he had not very far to go. Amongst the illustrations was a view of an early church in St. Elmo [p. 35]. The architect had a very beautiful suggestive precedent in this simple early Renaissance building. He simply carried out that idea; and it would be found that there was pretty much the same sort of early Renaissance idea about the church which would preclude the

use of that heavy cornice suggested by Mr. Flower. It was not in the mind of the architect to accentuate the fault this church possessed through want of height by a heavy horizontal line of cornice running the whole length of the church.

THE REV. W. K. R. BEDFORD said that, knowing Malta as well as any Englishman could possibly know it, he could endorse most heartily the remarks of Colonel Prendergast, and very highly appreciate the admirable Paper read by Mr. Flower. With regard to the Church of St. John, the roof was, of course, original. A great deal of the church was much more modern than Cassar's day, because Cotoner, a Grand Master of the time of Charles II., lavished a great amount of treasure on the building, and signs of this were to be found all over it. Most of the ornamentation dated only from about 1660, but the construction of the roof was due to the original architect and was part of the original plan. With regard to the genesis of that roof, it would be seen, by the small church at the top of St. Angelo where L'Isle Adam was buried, which dated from about 1530, that there used to be a much more decided Gothic pointed arch feeling, and that gradually, as time went on, they came down a little, though they still preserved a certain family likeness. There was a family likeness between those two churches. Whether the church at the top of St. Angelo was earlier than the coming of the Knights or not he could not tell, but the church contained a porphyry column which was certainly put there by L'Isle Adam, and he altered and enlarged it for his own burial-place; therefore it might be taken as the first building of the Knights in the island. The little chapel in the fosse of St. Elmo, which in its lines still remained as originally built, was decorated by Lascaris in 1636. In the Church of St. John the same principle actuated the architect, Cassar, who was no doubt influenced by what he already found there. Then he would call attention to the very important fact that subsequent to the first construction of Valletta, when Italian influence prevailed to a great extent, two great waves of reconstruction passed over the fortunes of the Order. The Spanish Grand Masters, of whom there were several in succession, brought in Spanish ways, and Spanish balconies could be found affixed to Italian buildings. There were one or two interesting examples of that in the hotels, as some of the buildings erected by individuals were called. In the Hôtel Verdelin, for instance, one of the most beautiful, the Spanish influence could be seen very plainly. After the lapse of another century the last Grand Masters, Pinto and De Rohan, erected some very handsome buildings more in the French style: thus the various nationalities one after the other impressed

in some degree their artistic feeling upon the buildings of the Order. In conclusion he would ask all Englishmen who cared about architecture to take note of another wave of reconstruction that was setting in. He was sorry to say that as the leases of these fine old courtyard buildings expired—not those used as public offices, but those let as dwellings—they were turned into flats, the courtyard filled up with bad stone (for there was bad stone in Malta), in fact the era of jerry-building had set in in Malta, and he hoped Englishmen would bring to bear all the influence they could to put a stop to such a state of things.

COLONEL J. R. HOGG, R.E., late Commanding Royal Engineer in Malta, made a few observations on the subject of the Paper, and referring to works carried out in the island during his term there, remarked on the difficulties those in charge had to contend with in the preparation of designs harmonising with architecture in official favour in England, rather than with that existent in Malta. With regard to the masonry work, he thought that nowhere in Europe could be seen such feeling, tasteful, and gentle designs as were conceived and executed by Maltese working masons.

MR. THOMAS BLASHILL [F.] asked the name of an old town outside Valletta, of which a description is given by Elliott Warburton in a book published some thirty or forty years ago. Speaking from recollection it was a very ancient town, containing fine old buildings, but quite deserted.

THE REV. W. K. R. BEDFORD, replying, said the town was Città Vecchia. The author's words in the work referred to were: "It reminded me of a city of the dead." There were a great many fine houses there. A great part of it was Sicilian Norman architecture, but the houses were all in courtyards, and had no windows looking to the outside, so that in walking along the lanes the whole place seemed to be deserted and dead. The houses had the peculiar little cornice about half-way up, shown in some of the photographs, with little corbels all along, and always the Sicilian Norman arch. It was a walled town, with six or seven streets of that character which evidently much impressed Elliott Warburton.

THE PRESIDENT said that not having seen Malta he could only speak of its architecture from Mr. Flower's photographs, drawings, and description. Valletta was interesting in every way, not only from the excellence of the architecture, but from being a city in Europe which was partly cut out of its own stone, like some of the Egyptian cave temples, and partly built from that which was cut out, and also from its style. There was one point mentioned which was profoundly interesting, that all the ornamental work had been done by the masons gratuitously, from the mere pride of skill and knowledge. This, however (the President continued), is not absolutely singular, for one of my brothers was in Mogador, and saw

a large brass dish of curious pattern in a brazier's shop, and knowing that I had a fancy for ornamental things he thought it would be interesting to me, and inquired the price of it. The brazier was a young fellow, and was of course short of money. My brother inquired how much the one he admired would cost, but it was sold; the brazier told him he could make him one, and asked him of what thickness he wanted it. My brother said that the thickness of the one he admired would do, but what he was particular about was the pattern; to this the brazier replied, "Oh, if you will only tell me the thickness of brass you want you may have any pattern you like; that adds nothing to the cost." So it seems to be in Malta. The masons, Mr. Flower tells us, even to this day pride themselves on their artistic skill, and do not look to be paid for it. It is a skill and pride that I am afraid is extinct in every other part of Europe, although it may still exist in some of those barbarous countries where they can do nothing good except in the way of art or beauty. I think it was Théophile Gautier who said that if you saw a beautiful basket, mat, or water-bottle, you might be sure it was made by savages who were probably cannibals, but if you saw anything that was hideous and repulsive it probably came from the most highly civilized and pious nation in the world. I do not know that there is any immediate connection between art and cannibalism, but still, it only shows that these savages have been more in the company of nature, have better observed it, and have greater delight in producing beauty than more highly civilized people. The plan of the Church of St. John reminds one of San Francesco at Rimini, which Alberti, in the fifteenth century, turned from a Gothic church into a temple to Isotta and the humanists. It consists of a wide nave with chapels on either side instead of aisles, only the divisions between the chapels are wide to form niches for the sarcophagi. These square niches are arched, and the composition rivals Roman work in simplicity and grandeur. The sarcophagi contain the ashes of some of the early Greek teachers and the early scholars of Italy, who were sepulchred there by that horrible tyrant, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta. This plan seemed to have taken Alberti, for when he built the Church of St. Andrea at Mantua, he carried out this same plan, only there was a transept to it, and over the crossing of the transept and the nave there was a dome. The character of most of the work at Malta, which is late sixteenth century, is not unusual in Italy of that time, but the chapel of St. Elmo is a remarkably fine example of the early Renaissance, and in fact is one of the most charming things I have seen. There is that delicacy of treatment and that peculiar character which marked the works of these early sculptors who turned architects; and gave us the benefit of their original conception,

slightly flavoured with classical knowledge, and which strike us as being the most beautiful things that were ever done since Greek days. There is a freshness of invention and treatment about their work that, together with their consummate skill, has never been repeated since. The early Renaissance men were men of such extraordinary powers that we do not come across their like in the present day. The only man I have ever known that could compare with some of the great early Renaissance artists was the late Lord Leighton, who was, like them, equally brilliant all round. You must consider that these men had become accomplished sculptors when they were almost boys, and that mostly it was after that time that they took up architecture. If any architect ever expects to rival the early Renaissance architecture, he must, of course, bring the same vigour, determination, and invention that they brought, and must expect to go through the same training, *i.e.* be apprenticed to a goldsmith, and after he has learned that art he must become a skilful painter and sculptor, and then turn architect. Of course, it is not our idea of architecture at all, but still as far as sweetness and beauty go it is unique; and if we can shut our eyes to the want of anything that we should call architectural skill—that is, exactly meeting the wants with the exact amount of material that is required, putting them in the exact place, and giving the proper character to the building—of course there is nothing like the early Renaissance architecture for charm and beauty since the days of the Greeks. Well, here we see a specimen of it that, as far as I know, has never been seen in Europe before—some of the other structures are fine, but of a much later date and of a less delightful character; as Mr. Flower remarked, many of the doorways put one in mind of the great gateways by Sanmichele. Altogether Malta seems to be a most wonderful place, and has been most admirably described by Mr. Flower. We are extremely obliged to him for the trouble he has taken in drawing our attention to this very charming architectural spot which is so little known to most people in Europe.

Mr. ARTHUR S. FLOWER, in responding to the vote, thanked Colonel Prendergast for his suggestions as to the possible origin and derivation of some of the peculiarities of the Church of St. John. Had he known Mr. Bedford was to be present, he should have hesitated about reading his Paper at all. Mr. Bedford's name was a household word so far as everything connected with Malta was concerned, and he hardly liked saying anything about the place in his presence. He wished they could have an opportunity of hearing more about it from such an authority. He hoped that many present might have the pleasure of going to Malta; they would find that he had told them only a tithe of the things to be seen there.



9, CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W., 20th November 1897.

CHRONICLE.

Mr. Flower's Paper and Illustrations.

Mr. Flower's Paper attracted a full attendance both of members and visitors, among the latter being military officers acquainted with Malta, and officials of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, including its distinguished Secretary, Sir Herbert C. Perrott, Bart., and the Librarian of the Grand Priory at St. John's Gate, the Rev. W. K. R. Bedford, whose observations [pp. 46-47] were received by the Meeting with every token of appreciation.

The illustrations hung on the walls and screens comprised plans and sections of the Cathedral Church of St. John, Valletta, and of the Governor's Palace, all specially prepared to large scale by the lecturer, a map of Malta and dependencies, and a plan of Valletta and its harbours. The photographs, numbering seventy-two in all, kindly lent by Mr. Flower for exhibition, formed an extremely interesting and beautiful collection, and were allowed to remain on view in the Library for a few days for the benefit of those unable to attend the Meeting. A list of them is appended:—

- 1 to 12. St. John's Cathedral, Valletta.
- 13 to 16. Auberge de Castille, Valletta.
- 17, 18. Auberge d'Italie, Valletta.
- 19 to 28. Governor's Palace, Valletta.
- 29, 30. Public Library, Valletta.
31. Palace of St. Antonio.
32. Tower of Verdala.
- 33, 34. Chapels, Forts St. Elmo and St. Angelo.
- 35 to 46. Fortifications and Gates.
- 47, 48. Great Hospital, Valletta.
- 49, 50. St. James's Church, Valletta.
51. Opera House, Valletta.
- 52 to 55. Street Views, Valletta.
- 56 to 59. Buildings in environs of Valletta.
- 60, 61. Parish Church, Musta.
- 62, 63. General Views, Città Vecchia.
- 64 to 68. St. Paul's Cathedral, Città Vecchia.
- 69 to 72. Phœnician and Roman remains.

Architects' Charges in Respect of Fire Claims.

Mr. HENRY COWELL BOYES [F.] writes:—

Members of the Institute may be glad to know that the action lately taken by the Practice Standing Committee has not been without effect. I

have recently superintended on behalf of the insured a reinstatement after a fire. The office concerned was the Imperial. When the work was finished I received, much to my surprise, a cheque from the builder employed by the office, with a letter informing me that it was for my fees, which it was arranged that he should pay. This I returned, and the attention of the office having been called to the transaction, I received a letter from Mr. Cozens-Smith, the manager, informing me that it was the result of an error on the part of an official. Mr. Cozens-Smith adds: "The Company has taken special pains to terminate the very unsatisfactory practice of making architects dependent on the good offices of the builders they superintend for the payment of the fees to which they are entitled; you also had been informed of this, and might well be surprised to find the Imperial continuing the objectionable practice." I have since received the Company's cheque for the amount. Architects having any difficulty in dealing with Fire Offices in these matters may find their hands strengthened by the knowledge of the action of the Imperial Office in thus meeting the wishes of the Institute.

The Study of Coloured Decoration.

It should interest architectural students generally, and especially junior members of the Association, to learn that the Painters' Company is again offering a Travelling Studentship of £50, to encourage the study of coloured decoration. Competitors must be attached to some school or institution connected with the study of applied art, situate within the larger metropolitan postal area, and must be prepared to spend at least six weeks in Italy during the year 1898. The competition will take place early in March. The conditions and full particulars can be obtained from the clerks of the Company, Painters' Hall, 9, Little Trinity Lane, E.C.

The Perth Architectural Association.

The Perth Architectural Association, the outcome of the aspirations of young men in the district interested and actively engaged in the study of architecture and engineering, held its first meeting on the 9th inst., Mr. G. P. K. Young [A.], President, in the chair. In an opening speech the President explained the objects of the Association, stating that it had been formed to improve their knowledge of the art and science of building, and to obtain better facilities for that purpose. To this end, working classes had been established, at which subjects were given out for study and discussion under the guidance of practising architects of the city. Arrangements were also in progress for the delivery of lectures. There had been a very good attendance at the classes, and much enthusiasm displayed. Mr. Hippolyte J. Blanc, R.S.A., then delivered the in-

augural address, of which the following is a brief abstract:—

The formation of the Society, Mr. Blanc said, was an important step on the part of local practitioners, showing that they recognised the dignity of their profession, and the responsibility attaching to those entering its ranks. The banding together of members of the same profession undoubtedly tended to the maintenance of professional etiquette, yet their influence for good would be weakened unless there was a recognised freemasonry, a fraternal and confident co-operation among its members. He wished to lay before them, as a young society, a few thoughts upon the interests of their profession, and indicate how best they could aid in promoting these. The future grew out of the past, and any effort towards progress which did not recognise the value of the past was unreliable. The enthusiasm of their beginning should be maintained as life progressed by a constant springing up of new actors as the old actors subsided in the restfulness of autumnal repose. Such an association should be raised upon the concrete of a fraternal communion, with a superstructure of unaffected love for the profession. Love was their keynote. Another requisite was devoted study towards knowledge, but it must be patient, persistent, and consistent. All knowledge acquired would never make an artist, but it would at least prevent the errors and anachronisms which betrayed the untutored hand. To Mr. Ruskin's mind there were two qualities which distinguished great artists—imagination and industry. Imagination was a high gift, though it could not be boasted that many artists possessed it. But industry had promised to it great rewards, and its exercise was within the power of all. The Association should be made helpful primarily to young members of the architectural profession, and also to the public who interested themselves in art matters. There was no knowledge which would not be useful to the architect, but it was not intended that an architect should be expert in all. He should, however, have such experience of all branches that in the interests of the public he should be able to design a building that would be sound in construction and healthful, without extravagant waste of material. Architecture was a definite art, much more so than the arts of painting and sculpture. It was in the decoration of the forms of the building that the art was expressible. The only way to obtain these requirements was by a course of well-directed study and by concurrent office practice during a specified number of years—five at least. In this country there was an absence of anything like State aid, and the burden was, in consequence, laid upon communities to establish, either by private enterprise or congregated effort, the necessary ateliers and larger schools where the instruction required by the architectural student might be obtained. The defect of their system was the too great ease with which one could enter the profession, take three or four years at very mechanical work in an architect's office, and without official study of any kind commence the commercial pursuits of an architect. With all the machinery in schools of art for training students there was still an important requisite wanting. There should be some form of test at the close of a youth's ordinary school education, from the result of which a direction might be given him as to the avocation he was best fitted for. The Association should exist primarily for instruction. It should be a nursery and training room for all entering the profession. Dealing with what should be their objects of study, he said the best subjects were to be found in the past. These designs, however, should be studied, and not merely copied. Lectures, &c., should be systematically pursued, and every encouragement given to outside measuring and sketching. In this connection they should make the camera their friend. The student, too, must not overlook his opportunities in gaining office practice. The great difference between the British system and that pursued on the Continent was that instead of being

too academic they had joined the practical with the academic. His care in the office should be to become a great draughtsman. In his early years of office work he should jealously guard himself against slovenliness. In architecture there should be a balance of light and shade as much as in the work of the sculptor or the painter. An architect's best help towards a satisfactory design was his first carefully finished drawing, and perspective should be carefully studied. In conclusion, Mr. Blanc gave advice as to examinations, and recommended the formation of an architectural library.

THE Cavaliere Boni [*Hon. Corr. M.*] writes to the President that he hopes to discover a dedicatory inscription of the Forum and Temple of Mars Ultor by Augustus behind some plastering on a wall by the Pantani at Rome.

REVIEWS. LXI.

(169)

QUANTITY SURVEYING.

Quantity Surveying, for the Use of Surveyors, Architects, Engineers, and Builders. 3rd edition, revised and enlarged. By J. Leaning. 8s. Lond. and New York, 1897. [Messrs. E. & F. N. Spon, 125, Strand, London; 12, Cortlandt Street, New York.]

Mr. John Leaning's *Quantity Surveying* is too well known a work to need any description of its general plan; little more is here intended than an indication of some of the leading features of the most recent issue. This, the third edition, is in many respects an improvement on its predecessors. It has been revised with evident care from the first page to the last, and has received many useful modifications and additions. The pages of the previous editions were headed throughout with the title of the book; in this edition the more useful method is followed of using a page heading that has reference to the matter immediately below it. As an indication of the amount of additional matter in the volume, it may be noted that the number of pages has been increased from 403 to 547, and the number of cuts from 54 to 68.

One of the most noticeable features of this edition is the considerable extension of the chapter on Prices, in which may now be found much information as to approximate estimates and cubing various classes of buildings, wages and overtime, trade discounts, and cognate matters. The usefulness of the tabulated form in schedules and elsewhere is emphasised, and several specimen tables have been inserted.

In the Law chapter there are additions, and the interesting case of *Gordon v. Blackburne* has been omitted.

The index is copious and, on the whole, correct; but the following errors may be noted:—

- "Dressers, 87," should be "176."
- "Stipulation, &c., 260," should be "403."
- "Law, 383," should be "386."

The author has a good deal to say upon the professional practice of surveyors, and upon their

relation with the architect, and his views upon the latter subject are instructive—though, perhaps, not very flattering to the architect. It would appear that Mr. Leaning regards the architect as being possibly an "artist" and planner of buildings, but scarcely as a master-builder. The key to his view of the case may be found in his assertion that the surveyor "will be practically the technical adviser of the architect on all matters of construction and detail," and a general glance through his book shows that he is by no means unprepared to regard as a surveyor's possible duties the detailing of mouldings, the determination of scantlings, and the writing of the specification. He does not deny that the architect may write a specification himself, and in that case "the surveyor has simply to correct the specification furnished by the architect," and when so corrected "it should agree with the quantities." Surely this looks like the tail wagging the dog.

If the foregoing extracts give a fair notion of what the quantity surveyor is to-day expected to do, there has been a considerable change since the days of our early youth, when the architect produced drawings and specifications so complete and clear that the surveyor's functions could not extend far beyond measuring and billing.

MATT. GARBUTT.

(170)

TWO OXFORD GUIDE-BOOKS.

Oxford and its Colleges. By J. Wells, M.A., Wadham College. Illustrated by E. H. New. 12s. Lond. 1897. Price 3s. [Messrs. Methuen & Co., 36, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.]

The Cathedral Church of Oxford: a Description of its Fabric, and a Brief History of the Episcopal See. By the Rev. Percy Dearmer, M.A. 8s. Lond. 1897. Price 1s. 6d. [Messrs. George Bell & Sons, York Street, Covent Garden, W.C.]

This is a very charming little book; it is more than a guide-book; it epitomises in an eminently readable way the history of the University, and, with the leading facts of architectural growth, development, and change, records all that is most important and worthy of remembrance in connection with the city, the cathedral, the various colleges, halls, and institutions of Oxford. The origin of the different colleges is described, and the vicissitudes of fortune they have undergone. References are made to the great personages associated at different times with these historic buildings, and to the political, social, and religious movements and events with which they have been connected. The various episodes and anecdotes scattered through the work endow it with that vitally human interest so often lacking in the ordinary dry-as-dust guide-book. Admirably bound, and printed in old-face type appropriate to the matter, the work is a most dainty and artistic production, and cannot fail to commend itself to the topographical and historical book lover. A good map of the city, showing the position of the colleges, is conveniently prefixed to the body of the

book. The illustrations, of which there are twenty-six, greatly enhance the attractiveness of the volume; they are from pen-and-ink drawings by Mr. New, and with a bright and sparkling effect convey an excellent general impression of the various buildings. From their breadth of treatment, right amount of detail, and judicious lighting and shading, these drawings, though small, illustrate in themselves that happy mean between the crude, coarse, archaic method of some illustrators, and the forced and overwrought, or vaguely sketchy, fashion of others. Charming, however, as the illustrations are, the introduction of a few figures would, in many of them, have imparted that touch of life which seems lacking, and rendered them more realistic and still more pleasing. The lettering and labels, too, might in many cases have been smaller with advantage; at present they are disproportionately large, and dwarf the drawings they are attached to.

The insertion in the letterpress of artists' names in connection with the portraits of college celebrities disturbs the continuity of the reading and in another edition would be well modified. The names should be retained, but in smaller type, or as foot-notes.

Mr. Wells has made a reputation as a lecturer and authority on Oxford and its colleges, and no visitor to the noble old city could possibly—in the absence of the author himself—have a pleasanter or more instructive guide than his book. It would be a happy thing if Mr. Wells (and Mr. New) would give the public, in a subsequent volume uniform with this, a more detailed history of the City and its municipal institutions, &c., in contradistinction to the University. Mr. Wells, though a *gownsmen*, is able and impartial enough to present the City's story from the *townsmen* point of view, and do justice to such a supplementary theme.

The Cathedral Church of Oxford is one of a series of cathedral guides produced by Messrs. George Bell under the general editorship of Messrs. Gleeson White and E. F. Strange, and of which several have already appeared.

Much that has been said in commendation of Mr. Wells's book is due to Mr. Dearmer's also. It fully deals with the general history of the cathedral, its monastic origin, the legendary history of St. Frideswide and her convent, the changes that occurred at the Reformation, and the establishment of "Cardinal" College, now Christ Church, and of the bishopric, &c. The book describes in detail the growth and development of the cathedral and college buildings, and all matters and features of interest connected with the fabric and its adornment. Numerous illustrations are given by photographic reproductions and sketches; a very good drawing by Mr. R. Phené Spiers of part of the celebrated fifteenth-century choir vaulting forms a frontispiece. The

various monuments are described, and a list of the Bishops of Oxford is given, with some brief but interesting biographical notes.

Mr. Dearmer writes in a scholarly manner and with a loving regard for the edifice he so ably describes—with a regard, in fact, which would make out the cathedral to be much older than many will be inclined to admit. He takes great and repeated pains to establish and support the theory that in 1004 King Ethelred "built the splendid church which forms the main part of the cathedral as we know it to-day." It must be admitted that he adduces many good arguments in favour of his contention, to discuss which fully would necessitate a close study of the fabric and comparison with other remains, as well as time and space not at the disposal of the writer of this notice. A charter of Ethelred is quoted which may or may not be authentic, and which at best proves nothing but that Ethelred established a monastery at Oxford, where St. Frideswide reposes.

Ancient documents are not always reliable. The old monks and clerics were not only clever at concocting stories of the miraculous, but also adepts, if need be, at forging documents to better the title to their possessions—witness the deed described on page 50 of Mr. Wells's book—invented, written, and sealed to prove that University College was founded by King Alfred the Great, which legendary deed was confirmed as late as 1726 by the Court of Queen's Bench: being bolstered up by the Fellows of the college, who pleaded that "religion would receive a great scandal" if it were decided in a Court of Justice that a "succession of clergymen" had "returned thanks for so many years for an idol, a mere nothing."

If Ethelred built a monastic church at Oxford, which he may have done, as his charter declares, is it not more likely that the Saxon work at the east end of the cathedral (consisting of the lower part of the eastern wall, with arches and apsidal foundations) is a remnant of Ethelred's building (1004) than a relic of Frideswide's primitive church (said to date from about 727)? It may be noted that these triple apses somewhat resemble remains at Deerhurst, though the openings to the side ones at Oxford are so small and narrow that the apses may have served merely for depositories of relics.

While it is probable, of course, that much of the old stone material of the earlier church was used up and incorporated in the walls and piers of the present structure, it seems exceedingly unlikely, on the face of it, that as early as about 1004, in the troublous times of Ethelred the Unready, one of the weakest and worst of the Saxon kings, when most of the country was overrun and devastated by the vengeful Danes, beggared by vast money payments to purchase their peace, and stricken with famine and disease, an arcaded church of

the dimensions of Oxford should be erected, with details superior to and more refined than most other buildings in the country, to which dates a hundred or a hundred and fifty years later are generally ascribed.

If it can be proved that "the main part of the cathedral as we know it to-day" was built at such a time (1004) and under such conditions, then old antiquaries who regarded most of our Romanesque structures as Saxon are probably right, and such authorities as Rickman, Bloxham, Parker and others, wrong. In such a case architects and archaeologists generally will have to modify their views and rearrange their dates and nomenclature.

Turning to other matters, one cannot help feeling pleased on comparing the east end of the cathedral, as it stands now from Scott's design, with its fenestration and aspect in old prints. It is a pity, however, that the ugly and seemingly useless buttress in the south transept was built by him or should be allowed to remain. It might at least be reduced in size.

To follow Mr. Dearmer through all the interesting particulars in his book is impracticable. Many of his comments will commend themselves to the reader and visitor, though few will be likely to share his pleasure in the Frideswide window of the Latin chapel. Anything more "loud" and garish in the way of stained glass can scarcely be imagined. Its legendary subjects may be curiously interesting, but their presentment is not beautiful. This window is like a gory blotch on the fair face of the cathedral.

The other Burne-Jones and Morris windows are exquisite in their quiet harmony, though they strike one as being conceived and treated rather too much in the classical spirit to be perfectly appropriate for a mediæval church. The principal figures are also somewhat out of scale, being rather too large for the lights they occupy, and St. Cecilia, from her cramped attitude, ugly drapery, and want of balance with the space around her, is, perhaps, the least successful of the representations.

Architects and others regardful of the national monuments, in which we all have a property and interest, cannot do better than procure, as they are published, this very excellent series of guide-books to our cathedrals. They embody in a handy and artistic form a great deal of historic and up-to-date information, are written by very competent authorities in a readable manner, are useful for reference, and are well illustrated. The plan, however, given with the Oxford volume is too small, and is badly placed in the book. To be useful the plan should be at least twice the size of that given, and should be put at the commencement or end of the book for ready reference without the necessity of turning over pages to find it. The diagrams on pages 33, 34,

and 35 would be better together, on opposite pages, but placed the same way of the compass for comparison.

JOHN COTTON.

Oxford.

Books received for Review.

The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome. A Companion Book for Students and Travellers. By Rodolfo Lanciani, D.C.L. Oxford, LL.D., Professor of Ancient Topography in the University of Rome. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 16s. [Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd., Bedford Street, Covent Garden.]

The Chippendale Period in English Furniture. By K. Warren Clouston. With illustrations by the Author. 40. Lond. & New York, 1897. Price 21s. [Messrs. Debenham & Freebody, Wigmore Street, London; Edward Arnold, 37, Bedford Street, Strand, London, and 70, Fifth Avenue, New York.]

A History of Renaissance Architecture in England, 1500-1800. By Reginald Blomfield, M.A. 2 vols. 40. Lond. 1897. Price 50s. net. [Messrs. George Bell & Sons, Covent Garden.]

The Dwelling House. By George Vivian Poore, M.D., F.R.C.P. With 36 illustrations. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 3s. 6d. [Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co., 39, Paternoster Row, E.C.]

The Canon: an Exposition of the Pagan Mystery perpetuated in the Cabala as the Rule of all the Arts. With a Preface by R. B. Cuninghame Graham. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 12s. net. [Elkin Mathews, Vigo Street, W.]

Windows: a Book about Stained and Painted Glass. By Lewis Day, Author of "Nature in Ornament," and other Text-books in Design. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 21s. net. [B. T. Batsford, 94, High Holborn, W.C.]

Decorative Heraldry: a Practical Handbook of its Artistic Treatment. By G. W. Eve. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 10s. 6d. net. [Messrs. George Bell & Sons, York Street, Covent Garden, W.C.]

Historic Ornament: Treatise on Decorative Art and Architectural Ornament. By James Ward, author of "The Principles of Ornament." 2 vols. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 7s. 6d. each. [Messrs. Chapman & Hall, 11, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.]

Library Construction Architecture, Fittings and Furniture. By F. J. Burgoyne, M.A. Vol. II. of the Library Series edited by Dr. R. Garnett. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 6s. net. [Mr. George Allen, 156, Charing Cross Road.]

Modern Architecture: A Book for Architects and the Public. By H. Heathcote Statham, F.R.I.B.A., Editor of *The Builder*, Author of *Architecture for General Readers*, *Form and Design in Music*, *Changes in London Building Law*, &c. With numerous illustrations of contemporary buildings. 80. Lond. 1897. Price 10s. 6d. [Messrs. Chapman & Hall, 11, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.]

MINUTES. II.

At the Second General Meeting (Ordinary) of the Session, held Monday, 15th November 1897, at 8 p.m., Professor Aitchison, A.R.A., *President*, in the Chair, the Minutes of the Meeting held 1st November 1897 [p. 24] were taken as read and signed as correct.

A Paper by Mr. Arthur S. Flower [A.], M.A., F.S.A., entitled NOTES ON RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE IN MALTA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BUILDINGS OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN, illustrated by a large collection of photographs and specially prepared plans, was read by the author, and the same having been discussed, a vote of thanks was passed to him by acclamation, and briefly acknowledged.

The proceedings then closed, and the Meeting separated at 10 p.m.

